



COMMUNITY RUGBY DAY

How to plan, promote and run a successful event

A rugby club is in an enviable position of having all the vital ingredients to run a successful event. It has a venue, the people and, crucially, a clear focus in the great game of rugby!

Throughout the year there are a number of opportunities to capitalise on from screening International matches to showcasing first team games.

This guide will help you to plan, promote and run an event; and more importantly, ensure that it delivers the identified outcomes.



THE BIG

5

1. PURPOSE

Ensuring you have a clear purpose for your event is crucial. It could be to develop your commercial revenue, attract new members, reward your volunteers or simply to showcase your club at its best. Or alternatively all the above! Whichever one it is, making sure you don't lose sight of your goal and communicating it to your helpers and attendees, keeps the focus and means the effort is concentrated on the right things.

2. PLAN

Once you've honed in on the 'why' of your event, it's time to plan the how. Planning a successful business event involves many details – venue, food, entertainment, guest list – and those are just the big four! Take the time to put together a plan you can follow step-by-step before, during and after your event.

There are two advantages to having a written plan: it makes delegating event responsibilities easier, and it helps you keep a rein on event expenses. Decide what you want to happen at your event and then write down the steps it takes to get there.

PLAN what will happen on the day; activities, catering, rugby offers, challenges, games etc.
IDENTIFY who will be required to help run the day. How many volunteers will you need? What roles will they have? What time will they need to be there?
UPDATE the club website with all information regarding the day and remember to make sure the phone is answered; now is the time to check how ready you are to receive new visitors.
SAFETY: conduct a risk assessment

3. DELEGATE

This one goes hand-in-hand with your written event plan. As you're deciding the details of your event, also decide who will be responsible for each task.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of a rugby club and normally harbor hidden talents. Identify those talents and delegate accordingly. It's easy to take on too much responsibility so don't overload any one person with event details.

4. ENGAGE

Now you've completed the planning you need the people. Consider the types of stakeholders you can attract and then go for it.

- Extensively promote the event to the wider community via press, posters, leaflets etc.
- Promote the event to your club community. Email your members and spread the word.
- Create a social media campaign using unique hashtags. Post regular updates on all networks to keep it current. Check out our social media guide for ideas.

5. FOLLOW UP

Remember that clear purpose you identified in stage 1? Following up with your attendees is a vital part of the process. Don't let the opportunity go to waste.

- Send a thank you email to volunteers
- Send an email to attendees and new contacts with next steps
- Publish photos on social media, tag relevant media, businesses, stakeholders etc
- Issue a press release to local newspapers/websites
- Assess how your priorities were met and decide on next steps to capitalise on increased awareness of the club.

EVENT DAY CHECKLIST

BEFORE

Issue Press Release

Start social media campaign

Email existing members Invite local MP/VIPs

Update website

Produce leaflets/posters for local businesses

DURING

Take photographs

Collect short quotes from attendees

BE THE BEST HOST

Update social media throughout the day

AFTER

Issue press release

Share photos and videos on social media

Send an email to all attendees and membership

Publish story on website



MAKE IT FUN

Along with screening the game, holding an event like this will give you the perfect opportunity to run all sorts of activities to showcase your club at its very best. Think about your club's strengths and what is possible. You could...

- Run pitch up and play for new members
- Do a concerted drive to recruit volunteers
- Have an exhibition match to highlight your club's successes to potential sponsors
- Run an Inner Warrior Camp
- Cook up a BBQ /hold a coffee morning
- Have a family fun day to encourage more parents to get involved with the club
- Hold a Touch Rugby tournament
- Organise a minis drop in



BE THE BEST HOST

There are a few simple principles to being a good host. Most of all it's about being welcoming and making sure new visitors are looked after. As well as using the event to capitalise on the commercial revenue opportunities, you need to ensure anyone visiting your club is keen to return.

- Make a great first impression; have someone in the car park welcoming guests warmly as soon as they arrive and tell them the important things (where the toilets are, who to speak to if they need anything etc)
- Ensure your facility is as clean and pleasant as possible
- Provide refreshments
- Plan interesting activities
- Be welcoming
- Be inclusive; a great host will cater for all their guests and make everyone feel part of the club
- Capture contact details of customers; that person who you just directed to the bar could be your new sponsor, your next treasurer or your star player next season!



DEVELOPING REVENUE

Whilst you may not want any barriers to your event such as selling tickets, having a captive audience is still a great way to generate some additional income for the coffers.

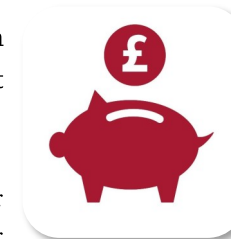
SPONSORSHIP: selling sponsorships is an easy and popular way to capitalise on the event. There are many ways to give your sponsor visibility; estate agent boards, banners at the event or their logo in the programme are just some suggestions.

WEBSITE: Events can generate considerable online traffic so why not turn it into a source of revenue with a few well-placed and thoughtfully chosen ads?

MERCHANDISE: People like stuff! Use your event as an opportunity to sell on the spot kit and equipment. And make sure you have enough stock; the last thing you want is to be turning away prospective buyers.

FOOD & BEVERAGE: This is an obvious one but ensuring your bar is stocked and there are enough serving staff is critical. Making sure your selling points are in visible and accessible positions will help to get customers. Remember, no one likes a queue!

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS: Events bring people together. Inviting local businesses is a great way to show them what your club has to offer. This time next year they could be one of the lucky ones with an advertising board on the pitch.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an incredibly useful communication tool for all ages, but it is particularly effective in communicating with a younger audience. It can enhance internal club communication and be used as a powerful external marketing tool too. One of the best ways to spread the buzz about an upcoming event is by using social media. With several platforms to leverage, you can get the word out to various segments of your audience where they live online.

Before you embark on a social media campaign you'll want to upgrade and update your social profiles. Interlink your social media pages; on Facebook include your Twitter handle etc and remember to keep it up to date.



CHOOSE YOUR SOCIAL NETWORKS

Promote your event on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, Eventbrite. See where most of your engagement is - do you have an active group on Facebook? Or do you have a better rapport on Instagram?

Don't neglect your slower channels, but make sure you are active where your audience is.



CHOOSE YOUR EVENT HASHTAG

Come up with a hashtag that's short, unique and easy to understand. Once you land an idea, stick with it. If you post anything relevant to your event remember to include your hashtag. Add it to your website, promotional emails and print materials.



CREATE AND SELL TICKETS THROUGH A FACEBOOK EVENT

When creating your Facebook Event, be sure to:

- Choose a 1920x1080 cover photo that looks good at any size
- Be specific about location, time, and category so Facebook can help promote your event
- Craft a compelling event description
- Put your ticketing link front and centre

There are all sorts of event management and ticket websites that can help you manage the promotion and ticketing of events. Eventbrite is one of the biggest and a good place to start.



In line with the Guinness Six Nations, England Rugby are gearing up to help clubs maximise on the wealth of opportunities around the tournament. Visit www.englandrugby.com/resources to access bespoke, downloadable marketing assets to help you engage with your local community, rag rate your club to ensure it's in tiptop shape with our simple checklist and check out how you can engage with new and lapsed players to get them Back in the Game following the tournament.